

LISTENING TOUR SUMMARIES

Part 2

Day 6: Emporia/Topeka Tour

August 23, 2007

Newman Regional Health (Emporia)

- *Around 15 attendees representing health care providers and administrators.*
- Support for consumer directed health care, price transparency, and tax credits.
- Need to level the playing field; help small businesses.
- Support for personal responsibility and accountability in financing health care.
- Recognize the need to reform payment schedules in order to align them with keeping patients healthy and treating them in an efficient manner; need to control costs.
- Support for paying for prevention and for penalizing unhealthy behaviors (e.g., smokers pay higher premiums).
- Need to reduce and standardize paperwork; currently it is too burdensome and inefficient.

Emporia Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 5 attendees representing businesses.*
- Mixed feelings towards incremental versus comprehensive health reforms.
- Mixed feelings about standardization and flexibility within health policies, paperwork, and the delivery of care; support for less government regulations.
- Need for more affordable and portable health insurance plans that promote competition.
- Recognize many barriers to prevention efforts. Do not support mandates for prevention due to cost.
- Employers need help in educating their employees about prevention and small businesses need help in providing health coverage to employees.
- Support consumer-directed health (e.g., health savings accounts, price transparency, and flexible spending accounts).
- Need more affordable health insurance; support for personal responsibility for financing health care, but not through mandates.

Flint Hills Community Health Clinic (Emporia)

- *Around 40 attendees representing consumers.*
- Many concerns regarding rural community access to doctors, dentists, and specialized care, especially for uninsured and Medicaid patients.

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Medicaid and HealthWave:

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State Employee Health

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Phone: 785-296-6280

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State Self Insurance Fund:

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- Access to affordable insurance coverage is a problem for small businesses and college-aged students who have aged out of their parents' insurance coverage.
- Support for personal responsibility in financing health care and healthy behaviors; use penalties (e.g., tobacco and junk food taxes) and incentives (e.g., pay doctors to counsel on nutrition; lowered premiums for healthy lifestyles).
- Target schools in delivering messages on healthy behaviors.
- Concerns regarding the growing pharmaceutical industry and the negative influence it has on consumers; promote more use of generic drugs.

Mennonite Community (Emporia)

- *Around 5 attendees representing Mennonite community members and leaders.*
- Difficulty in accessing health care due to rural location and affordability; increasing number of uninsured in the congregation.
- Recognize system is fragmented; support for consumer-directed health care (e.g., price transparency and consumer education).
- Support promoting personal responsibility in terms of healthy behaviors, using services appropriately, and financing health care.
- Support providing incentives to providers in order to improve quality of care delivered.
- Churches are small businesses and need help providing health care assistance (coverage and education) to vulnerable populations.

Hosted by Insurance Commissioner, Sandy Praeger (Topeka)

- *Around 15 attendees representing the insurance industry.*
- Support for consumer-directed health care (e.g., education and price transparency).
- Support for promoting personal responsibility in financing health care, healthy behaviors, and appropriate use of services.
- Need for simplification in the system (e.g., administrative and consumer understanding).
- Support for using incentives to encourage the purchase of health insurance (e.g., health savings account tax credits) and promoting healthy behaviors (e.g., policies that cover preventive services).
- Support use of electronic health records to improve quality and efficiency and to reduce duplications.
- State needs to address problems with small businesses purchasing health insurance.

Day 7: Hutchinson/Dodge City/Garden City Tour

August 24, 2007

United Methodist Health Ministry Fund (Hutchinson)

- *Around 30 attendees representing consumers.*
- Support for consumer directed health care (e.g., consumer education, health information technology)
- Middle class, small businesses and young people need help in accessing affordable health insurance.
- Need for simplification of health system; current system lacks coordination and is too complicated.
- Mixed feelings about competition and regulations of health care and health insurance.
- Support for using incentives in prevention efforts; target children and schools, and provide more medical education to providers about health and wellness.
- Current system makes access of certain services difficult (e.g., mental and dental health care).

Reno County Farm Bureau (Hutchinson)

- *Around 7 attendees representing farmers and consumers.*
- Mixed feelings in regards to government regulation and government-run health care; like Medicare program, but afraid of tax increases associated with government programs.
- Farming industry is a small business and needs assistance in providing employees health insurance.
- Support for consumer-directed health care (e.g., price transparency, consumer education, and tax credits).
- Need more education on where to receive free or reduced health care services.
- Support for prevention; health insurance policies should cover preventive services.

Dodge City Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 7 attendees representing businesses.*
- Support for prevention efforts (e.g., smoke free environments, pay for screenings to catch cancer early); target youth. Support using penalties to promote healthy living (e.g., smokers pay higher health care premiums).
- Do not support a single-payer system; support less regulation in order to promote competition.
- Need more providers to meet health care needs of Kansas; provide more money for student scholarships in the health care field.
- Need for more portability in health insurance.
- Need higher reimbursement for government programs to reduce cost-shifting on to privately insured patients.

United Methodist Western Kansas Mexican-American Ministries (Garden City)

- *Around 15 attendees representing consumers and providers.*
- Need for more standardization and simplification of the health care system.
- Support for paying for prevention (e.g., pay providers for nutritional counseling) and targeting schools, parents, and employers to promote prevention. Support for using incentives to promote healthy behaviors (e.g., lower premiums).
- Access to providers and services a major concern for rural communities.
- Support for paying for a primary care medical home to better coordinate care; support electronic medical records, but not as a replacement for medical homes.
- Support for promoting personal responsibility for financing health care and using services appropriately.

Day 8: Topeka/Manhattan/Salina Tour

August 28, 2007

Kansas Association of Insurance Agents (Topeka)

- *Around 20 attendees representing insurance agents.*
- Support use of health information technology (e.g., price transparency and health records) and consumer-directed health care.
- Need more consumer education on where to access services that meet financial and health care needs.
- Do not support most tax increases, premium increases, or a connector. However, general support for increased tobacco taxes to help subsidize costs of the uninsured.
- Support increased competition in order to improve quality of health plans; reduce regulations in order to foster competition.

- Support personal responsibility for paying for health care, but realize its barriers. Need to educate the young on how to finance their health care costs.
- Support for paying for prevention via health/risk assessment programs.

Kansas Farm Bureau (Manhattan)

- *Around 10 attendees representing farmers and Farm Bureau staff.*
- Farmers need help in accessing and providing coverage for employees.
- Do not support individual mandates, increased governmental regulations, or increased cost (e.g., taxes, higher premiums).
- Support promoting personal responsibility in financing health care.
- Need for simplification of system and of paperwork; need to reduce bureaucracy.
- Need more providers in order to meet Kansas health care needs; focus on getting students into health care fields.
- Lack of access to services and affordability of health care are major concerns.

Flint Hills Community Clinic (Manhattan)

- *Around 15 attendees representing safety-net providers and administrators.*
- Small businesses need help in providing health insurance coverage.
- Support use of education (e.g., health fairs), incentives, and penalties (e.g., junk food tax) for prevention efforts and to promote appropriate use of services.
- Support for medical homes; need to pay for primary care visits.
- Access issues due to lack of providers and affordable insurance needs to be addressed. Need to keep costs down in order to increase access to health care.
- Current payment system encourages doctors to provide more care instead of better quality and efficient care.

Salina Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 15 attendees businesses, providers, and health care administrators.*
- Need standardization in paperwork and reimbursements to save time and money.
- Recognize that prevention efforts require generational/cultural changes and are long-term; support for using incentives to encourage healthy behaviors.
- Need to level the playing fields to enable different business sectors (e.g., small businesses and farmers) to purchase health insurance for their employees and to offer worksite wellness programs.
- Believe health savings accounts and tax credits might encourage young healthy populations into purchasing health insurance.
- Do not support individual or employer mandates; prefer use of incentives and disincentives to get employers and individuals to purchase health insurance.
- Recognize the need for competition in the system and do not want to drive health insurers out of Kansas.

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